

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

Project Ref. No.	18-017
Project Title	Developing knowledge to eradicate house mice from UK OT islands
Country(ies)	Tristan da Cunha, Falklands and South Georgia
UK Organisation	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Collaborator(s)	Conservation Department Tristan da Cunha (CD-TDC), Falklands Conservation (FC), The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI)
Project Leader	Dr Richard Cuthbert (RSPB)
Report date	31 October 2010
Report No.	Half year report number 1
Project website	To be established

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – September) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

1.1 Employ two experienced eradication operators to visit and produce draft Operational Plan with project manager for Gough Island

Rodent eradication experts and experienced operational managers Nick Torr and Chris Golding from New Zealand were recruited as consultants in August and visited Gough Island in September/October. A provisional draft Operational Plan was written during this visit.

1.2 Operational managers identify key remaining steps that need to be addressed prior to an operation

The visit of Nick Torr, Chris Golding and Richard Cuthbert to Gough Island in September/October identified some remaining key areas that will need to be undertaken prior to a mouse eradication on Gough Island. These additional steps will be listed in the draft Operational Plan

2.1 Develop and agree research plans for Steeple Jason with Falklands Conservation and Wildlife Conservation Society

Discussions with project partner Falklands Conservation has produced a research plan for two visits to Steeple Jason island, with the first visit planned for January/February 2011.

2.2 Recruit field biologists to work alongside partners, and train partners in methods studies on mice ecology, bait acceptance trials and mice impacts on high risk bird species

Two RSPB researchers (Dr Mark Bolton and Andrew Stanbury) have been recruited to visit Steeple Jason island in January/February 2011 to undertake the first fieldwork programme. Both Mark and Andrew visited Steeple Jason in 2009 for a short period, and consequently are familiar with the island and the proposed work plan. One staff member from Falklands Conservation and a local islander have also been recruited for the January/February 2011 fieldwork, and training on the research methods and monitoring will be undertaken.

2.3 Organise permits, logistical support and equipment for field research

Falklands Conservation submitted the proposed fieldwork plan to the island's owner (The Wildlife Conservation Society) and the proposed activities have been approved. Accommodation in the research hut on Steeple Jason, flights and berths have been arranged.

3.1 Develop and agree research plans with partners in South Georgia Government and with South Georgia Heritage Trust

Discussions between the project manager, Darren Christie (Environmental Officer South Georgia Government) and Tony Martin (Project Manager for the South Georgia Heritage Trust) have been undertaken to agree fieldwork plans for South Georgia in order to maximise the benefit of this project to the planned rodent eradications on South Georgia. These fieldwork plans are still being finalised and are planned to take place in 2012

4.3 Establish remote networks for bi-monthly updates between the project partners to collaborate on project planning

Discussions between all main project partners and personnel at Tristan, the Falklands and South Georgia have been undertaken via email, Skype and face-to-face meetings, however a formal network of bi-monthly updates has yet to be established. Work to establish a more formal network and a project website will be undertaken in the coming months.

4.4 Produce educational materials and mouse game for use by UKOT children and visitors, disseminate materials to OTs

Barrie Cooper (International Education Officer at the RSPB) and Clare Stringer (Overseas Territories International Officer at the RSPB) have developed a draft of the proposed "mouse game" in August/September. Illustrations and further information for this mouse game will be developed during the next 6-months.

2. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Changes to the project's outputs and logical framework were made following new advice from the Island Eradication Advisory Group (IEAG, based in New Zealand's Department of Conservation) and new developments for plans to eradicate rodents from South Georgia (being undertaken by the South Georgia Heritage Trust). Other than these changes, no major problems have been encountered in the project's progress.

Have any of these issues been discussed with the Darwin Secretariat and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

A change request form was submitted to the Darwin Initiative in July and the proposed changes and new work plan were approved.

Discussed with the DI Secretariat: Yes , in July 2010 (month/yr)

Changes to the project schedule/workplan: Yes , in...July 2010.....(month/yr)

3. Do you expect to have any significant (eg more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes

If yes, and you wish to request a carryforward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible. It would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication of how much you expect this request might be for.

Estimated carryforward request: £10,000 – 15,000

As outlined in our previous change request form for this project we are awaiting advice from eradication experts on the proposed work plan on Gough Island, following on from a recent visit to Gough Island by myself and two New Zealand eradication managers. Advice on the best next steps for this project will be obtained in the first week of December, when our draft Operational Plan (written in September/October) is presented to the New Zealand Department of Conservation Island Eradication Advisory Group. Once I have received feedback from this meeting I will be in contact about the next steps and any budget changes for this project. I anticipate that I will be able to contact you either before Christmas, or else in early January at the latest.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No.

Please send your **completed form email** to Eilidh Young, Darwin Initiative M&E Programme at Darwin-Projects@ectf-ed.org.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 14-075 Darwin Half Year Report**